

Your Venue's Phone Is a Revenue Channel

Most venues think of the phone as an overhead, a bill, and something that rings at the worst possible moment. Do the arithmetic on a single missed function enquiry and it stops being an overhead.

Start with the arithmetic, not the features. One function enquiry is worth *heads × spend*, typically a hundred times an ordinary cover, often with repeat business behind it. That caller is **shopping**, rings the next venue within minutes, and **does not leave a voicemail**. Meanwhile a third to a half of your calls are “what time do you open” and need no human at all. Four moves, in order of return: **count your calls for one week** so you are designing from your own data; **give function enquiries a dedicated path** with a named owner, a mobile and a same-day response; **route by service period, not office hours**, and let a twenty-second greeting absorb the routine questions; and turn on **missed-call SMS plus voicemail transcription** to recover the calls that arrive while you are flat out or shut.

■ The short version

Type of call	Roughly worth	How it behaves if you miss it
Someone asking your opening hours	Nothing directly	They look at your website. No loss
A table booking	One cover, or a few	Books online instead, or rings back. Small loss
A change to tonight's booking	Protects an existing booking	May become a no-show. Moderate loss
A complaint	Protects a customer and a review	Becomes a public review instead. Real loss
A function or event enquiry	Heads × spend per head	Goes to a competitor within minutes, permanently, and you never find out

■ Also worth knowing

What they are doing	What that means you must do
Ringling three or four venues in one sitting	Answer, or be the venue that did not. There is no second chance and no callback
Judging whether you can handle their event	They need someone who knows capacity, minimum spend and available dates, not whoever was nearest the phone
Under time pressure and often emotional	A wake, a milestone birthday, a work party they were told to organise. Confidence and speed matter more than price
Not leaving voicemails	If you rely on voicemail for this category you are relying on the least likely outcome
Deciding partly on who responds first	Same-day response is not good service; it is the difference between winning and losing the event

A test worth running this week

Have a friend ring your venue at 12:40pm on a Friday and ask about a function for forty people in November. Then ring at 7:30pm on Saturday and do the same. Note how long it rings, who answers, whether they could answer the questions, and how long the callback took. **That is what your best prospect experiences.** Most venue owners find the exercise uncomfortable, which is what makes it worth doing.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What is a missed function enquiry actually worth?
- ☐ How should function enquiries be handled differently?
- ☐ How should a venue phone behave during service?
- ☐ Is a recorded greeting worse service than a person answering?
- ☐ Is it a problem to take deposit card details over the phone?
- ☐ How do we capture calls that come in after hours?
- ☐ What changes when you run several venues?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 663 222** or visit vocphone.com/about/contact-us.